



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
One Ashburton Place, Room 2102, Boston, MA 02108

Seaport Economic Council Grant Program

FY2026 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
Program Guidelines and Application Template

INVESTING IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S BLUE ECONOMY



Application Publication Date:

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Application Deadline:

Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.

Questions:

seaportcouncil@mass.gov

Table of Contents

A. INTRODUCTION	2
B. WHAT’S NEW IN FY2026	2
C. PROGRAM PURPOSE	3
D. ELIGIBILITY	3
E. GRANT FUNDING CATEGORIES	3
F. PROCUREMENT FEATURES	4
G. EVALUATION CRITERIA.....	5
H. APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDANCE	6
I. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS.....	6
APPENDIX: Applicant Template.....	8

A. INTRODUCTION

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is pleased to announce the opening of the FY2026 round of the Seaport Economic Council Grant Program. The program is administered by the Executive Office of Economic Development (EOED) and is now accepting applications for projects that are ready to commence in FY26.

The Seaport Council serves all 78 of Massachusetts’ diverse coastal communities by making strategic investments in projects that develop and advance the strengths of the local maritime economy. The maritime economy remains a vital part of Massachusetts and presents an untapped potential for economic growth, jobs development, and investment across the Commonwealth and in coastal communities.

In FY2026, the Seaport Economic Council (SEC) will continue to provide critical capital grant funds to support projects that improve the Commonwealth’s seaports and coastal communities by developing infrastructure the enhances or enables economic activity. The program will be again accepting and reviewing applications on a competitive basis.

B. WHAT’S NEW IN FY2026

While many of the questions in the application will be like prior rounds, the application has been further streamlined to ensure that projects are providing the most relevant information needed to demonstrate their readiness.

The application and guidelines have also been revised to align with more specific evaluation criteria. Applicants are invited to submit proposals that meet the goals of one of the available grant funding categories.

Most significantly, the grant categories for this year have been updated to better focus investment on projects that most closely align with the Council’s priorities. Applications that propose projects that incorporate the deployment, testing and/or development of advanced technologies will be favorably reviewed. Examples of advanced technologies would include Autonomous Systems, Digital Twins, Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning, Data Analytics, Advanced Sensors and Internet of Things (IoT), Cybersecurity, Alternative Fuels, Carbon Capture, etc.

C. PROGRAM PURPOSE

As outlined in the state capital budget, the Seaport Economic Council Grant Program is established to provide capital funding to coastal communities for community planning and investment activities that will stimulate economic development in all sectors of the blue economy , advance the development of maritime technologies and innovation, and to construct, make improvements, repair, maintain, and protect coastal assets that are vital to achieving these goals. It also provides for the planning, prioritization, selection, and implementation of projects that consider climate change impacts in furtherance of the goals outlined in the state’s integrated hazard mitigation and climate adaptation plan.

D. ELIGIBILITY

The program is open to all 78 coastal communities of the Commonwealth and other qualified public entities. Specifically, any Massachusetts city or town, acting by and through its municipal officers or by and through an agency designated by such municipal officers to act on their behalf, or any local public entity, may apply to the program for a grant in a specified amount to fund a public infrastructure project. Two or more municipalities may apply jointly, with one municipality or public entity acting as a fiscal agent. In instances where the municipality is not the lead on a particular application, it is strongly suggested and sometimes required that the municipality serve as co-applicant.

Preference will be given to those applications that demonstrate collaboration and/or include an advanced maritime technology component, and joint applications are encouraged by entities with a proven track record in maritime sector strategy, maritime economic development (including research and technology development), and the sustainable development of economically supportive and resilient coastal assets.

E. GRANT FUNDING CATEGORIES

In FY2026, the Seaport Economic Council grant program will consider applications that are proposing a project in one of the following categories:

- ☐ **Local Maritime Economic Development Planning Grants:** Coastal communities vary in size and scope from deep-water port cities to small fishing villages. These grants provide capacity for coastal communities to explore their unique advantages and generate economic development plans which help them realize their full potential, increase job growth, and maximize the maritime economic sector for their community. Proposals that develop or leverage research and/or technology development assets will be viewed favorably.
- ☐ **Port and Terminal Infrastructure Grants:** Port Infrastructure Development Grants assists in funding eligible projects for the purpose of improving the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports. Proposals that include the development of research infrastructure and/or testbed facilities (digital or physical) will be reviewed favorably.

- ❑ **Recreational Boating and Coastal Tourism Assets Grants:** The grants are intended to support coastal communities with implementing recreational boating and coastal tourism projects and approaches as part of their broader efforts to build climate resilience and advance their sustainable development goals. Proposals that will result in the development of marine and coastal research infrastructure and/or learning and engagement environments will be favorably reviewed.
- ❑ **Dredging Design & Permitting Grants:** This program provides pre- construction-phase funding, on a competitive basis, for saltwater dredging projects that contribute to the economic significance, recreational value, public safety, and/or coastal resilience of Massachusetts’ coastal harbors. Proposals that incorporate the development or implementation of advanced technologies, such as AI, Autonomous Systems, IoT, GPS mapping or Digital Twin modeling, will be favorably reviewed.

F. PROCUREMENT FEATURES

Application and Program Highlights	
Project Categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Maritime Economic Development Planning • Port and Terminal Infrastructure • Recreational Boating and Coastal Tourism Assets • Dredging Design & Permitting
Grant Use	<p>Predevelopment: Design, engineering & architecture documents, pre-permitting, proforma development, due diligence, bidding, testing etc.</p> <p>Construction: Earthwork and/or site work, such as demolition, road and infrastructure construction, utility relocation, bridge/culvert repairs, etc. May include contingency (up to 10%), construction administration, traffic control, and final design (up to 10%).</p> <p>Other Capital Expenditures: These could include the purchase of equipment or the development of new technology platforms or systems (digital infrastructure). These types of expenditures must be accounted for by the recipient in its financial records as a capital expenditure under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (“GAAP”).</p>
Acquisition Method and Contract Payment Terms	Cost reimbursement contracts. Funds are disbursed on a cost reimbursement basis, on 45-day cycles, only for approved expenses based on a scope of work contained in a fully executed contract with EOED.
Performance Period	Three years. SEC grants will run for a maximum of 3 full fiscal years following the successful execution of a contract.

ANTICIPATED PROCUREMENT CALENDAR	
NOFA Published / Application Open	Wednesday, August 13, 2025
Application deadline	Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.
Anticipated Notification of Award Decisions and Contracting	November 2025
Anticipated Contract Start	January 1, 2026

G. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Only applications that meet the eligibility and project type requirements, as outlined above, will be considered. Applications will be evaluated and scored based on the following criteria:

1. Applicant Information

- The applicant is an eligible public entity.
- The project site is in an eligible coastal community.
- The application was submitted by a formal partnership and/or the applicant has convened a meaningful group of stakeholders that are part of the project plan.

2. Project Information

- Project clearly aligns with one of the eligible project types.
- The project narrative provides a clear summary of the project, describes the project need, and explains why it is important to the community.
- The applicant provides a detailed scope of work that aligns with the project category and describes appropriate grant uses.
- The application has described any work that has been completed to advance the project goal.
- The application clearly describes how the project will advance the community's maritime economy, economic development goals, and/or other public benefits.
- The applicant demonstrates evidence of the public ownership of the site, plan for public ownership in the future, or clear public benefits if site will remain privately owned.
- The applicant has outlined a reasonable construction schedule based on the scope of the project, and the understanding that the project must be completed within three years.
- The applicant demonstrates clear understanding of the required permits/licenses and has provided a reasonable timeline for acquiring such approvals.
- The applicant has indicated whether the project will require MEPA Review. And if yes, the MEPA process has started.
- The applicant has clearly described if and how the project is consistent with a community waterfront plan and/or indicated that it is a priority recommendation in the community's MVP planning report.
- The applicant should demonstrate that they have evaluated their project for potential efficiencies and cost savings achievable through the integration of advanced technologies.

3. Project Budget and Sources

- The proposed budget and grant request seem reasonable and clearly reflect expenses related to the project scope.

- The applicant demonstrates that there will be match funding and clearly describes the source(s) and status of the match.
- Cost estimate or price proposal is reasonably aligned with the scope of work and budget.

4. Community/Environmental Impacts

- The applicant provides a clear description of the affected community, as well as the community impacts and benefits.
- The applicant clearly describes the direct or indirect economic and community development benefits of the project.
- The applicant clearly understands and describes steps they will take to mitigate environmental impacts.
- The applicant provides their climate resilience report and if applicable, indicates the design storm that will be used.

H. APPLICATION PROCESS AND GUIDANCE

1. Program materials, including a copy of the NOFA and the online application are available online on the program's webpage at [Seaport Economic Council | Mass.gov](#).
2. The application template in this NOFA is provided for reference purposes only. The document may be used to make notes and prepare draft responses. However, the formal application must be completed, and submitted by the deadline, through [Submittable](#), the online platform linked on the SEC website. (Email, USPS or fax submissions will not be accepted.)
3. SEC staff will be unable to answer any individual questions while the application period is open. Questions must be emailed to seaportcouncil@mass.gov. They will be aggregated, and responses will be posted on the SEC webpage.
4. **Applications are due by Wednesday, September 10, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. Please note that the EOED staff will only be available for support until 4pm on that day. (Applicants may be able to contact [Submittable.com/help](#) for assistance after that time.)**
5. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is received on time by EOED. All applications will be logged as to date and time received and kept on file as public record. Late submissions will not be considered.
6. EOED reserves the right to request additional information from the applicant or external sources as may be necessary to complete the application review.
7. In addition, EOED reserves the right to make partial awards as deemed necessary and appropriate to ensure equitable distribution of these resources.

I. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Economic Development complies with all Commonwealth of Massachusetts' procurement laws and regulations set forth and overseen by the Commonwealth's Operational Services Division when awarding contracts as well as the state's award requirements as mandated and overseen by the Office of the State Comptroller when dispersing these funds. All responses and information submitted in response to this NOFA are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c.66, s.1-, and to c.4, s.7, ss.26.

Successful applicants, upon notification of award, will be required to enroll in the Electronic Funds Payment (EFT) system as a contract requirement by completing and submitting the Authorization Form for review, approval and forwarding to the Office of the Comptroller. If the applicant is already enrolled in the program, it may indicate in its response. Because the EFT Authorization contains banking information, this form, and all information contained on this form, shall not be considered a public record and shall not be subject to public disclosure through a public records request.

Once contracted, the Grantee shall prepare and submit to EOED, on a quarterly basis and in the format provided by EOED, a progress and financial report outlining the status of the Project. Such a report shall include, at minimum: Project milestones and goals achieved to date. The grantee shall supplement each report with additional information as may be requested by EOED. As part of the final report, Grantee shall furnish in a template provided by EOED, a memo certifying Project completion.

During the term of a contract agreement and for a period up to seven years thereafter, if the Executive Office of Economic Development is audited, the grantee will be required to make all records relating to this grant available.

APPENDIX: Applicant Template

APPLICATION TEMPLATE

This template is provided as a guide for reference purposes only. Applications must be submitted electronically through the Submittable platform for consideration.

SECTION 1: Applicant Information

- 1.1. **Applicant Organization Name:** _____
- 1.2. **Organization Type:** ☐ Public Organization ☐ Non-Profit Organization
- 1.3. **Applicant Organization Legal Address**
Address: _____ State: _____
City/Town: _____ Zip Code: _____
- 1.4. **Organization CEO**
CEO Name: _____ CEO Title: _____
CEO Tel.: _____ CEO Email: _____
- 1.5. **Project Contact** (if different)
Contact Name: _____ Contact Title: _____
Contact Tel: _____ Contact Email: _____
- 1.6. **Project City/Town:** (Select from drop-down) [*list of 78 coastal communities*]
- 1.7. **Project Site Address:** _____
- 1.8. **ATTACHMENT:** *Attach a site plan, conceptual drawing, and/or construction concept design that clearly demonstrates the location and outlines the proposed work.*
- 1.9. **Joint Application** – Is this a joint application between two or more entities, which will entail a formal arrangement for a shared scope of work and allocation of funds?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 1.9.a. If yes, provide contact information for the co-applicant:
- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Co-Applicant Entity Name: _____ | Co-Applicant Entity Address: _____ |
| Co-Applicant CEO Name: _____ | Co-Applicant CEO Title: _____ |
| Co-Applicant CEO Tel.: _____ | Co-Applicant CEO Email: _____ |
- 1.10. **ATTACHMENT:** *Attach a letter from the co-applicant affirming partnership.*
- 1.11. **Partnerships:** Describe the role of joint applicant(s) and/or other partners involved in the project. _____
(500 characters)
- 1.12. Is any part of this project located in an MBTA Community, and therefore subject to compliance with the MBTA Communities 3A Zoning Law?
☐ Yes ☐ No

1.12.a. If yes, does the applicant understand that the community's compliance status with the MBTA Communities 3A Zoning Law will affect this application's eligibility for funding?

☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION 2: Project Information

2.1 **Project Name:** _____ *(50 characters)*

2.2 **Short Project Abstract:** _____ *(500 characters)*

2.3 **Project Type:**

☐ **Local Maritime Economic Development Planning Grants:** Coastal communities vary in size and scope from deep-water port cities to small fishing villages. These grants provide capacity for coastal communities to explore their unique advantages and generate economic development plans which help them realize their full potential, increase job growth, and maximize the maritime economic sector for their community. Proposals that develop or leverage research and/or technology development assets will be viewed favorably.

☐ **Port and Terminal Infrastructure Grants:** Port Infrastructure Development Grants assists in funding eligible projects for the purpose of improving the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods through ports and intermodal connections to ports. Proposals that include the development of research infrastructure and/or testbed facilities (digital or physical) will be reviewed favorably.

☐ **Recreational Boating and Coastal Tourism Assets Grants:** The grants are intended to support coastal communities with implementing recreational boating and coastal tourism projects and approaches as part of their broader efforts to build climate resilience and advance their sustainable development goals. Proposals that will result in the development of marine and coastal research infrastructure and/or learning and engagement environments will be favorably reviewed.

☐ **Dredging Design & Permitting Grants:** This program provides pre- construction-phase funding, on a competitive basis, for saltwater dredging projects that contribute to the economic significance, recreational value, public safety, and/or coastal resilience of Massachusetts' coastal harbors. Proposals that incorporate the development or implementation of advanced technologies, such as AI, Autonomous Systems, IoT, GPS mapping or Digital Twin modeling, will be favorably reviewed.

2.4 **Project Narrative** – Provide an overview of the project, describing the issues or opportunities that it aims to address, stakeholders involved, and why the project is important to the community. _____

(2,000 characters)

2.5 **Scope of Work** – Provide a detailed description, outlining the scope of work and the proposed uses of the grant. (Must be capital expenses. Refer to the guidelines for details on allowed use of funds.) _____

(2,000 characters)

2.6 **Progress to Date** – Describe any work that has been completed on this project to date, such as community/regional planning, design and engineering, prior project phases completed, etc. If applicable, include information about any prior state/federal funding received for the project. _____

(1,000 characters)

2.7 **Anticipated Outcomes** – Describe how the project will specifically advance the community’s maritime economy, economic development goals, and any other public benefits that the community seeks to achieve. Include tangible deliverables and outcomes. _____
(1,000 characters)

2.8 **Site Ownership** – Is the project site publicly owned?
☐ Yes ☐ No

2.8.a. If yes, describe the type of public ownership (Check all that apply).
☐ Public Land ☐ Right of Way ☐ Other. Specify: _____
☐ Leasehold ☐ Easement

2.8.b. **ATTACHMENT: Attach evidence and relevant documents demonstrating ownership, such as a lease, MOU, easement records, etc.**

2.8.c. If no, explain if and how the site can be publicly acquired/owned by the project start date. If public ownership is not planned, clearly outline and describe the project’s public benefit. _____
(1,000 characters)

2.9 **Design Completion** - What percentage of the project design is completed? _____%

2.10 **Project/Construction Timeline** - Provide the planned schedule/timeline for the coastal infrastructure project. (Please note timeline should consider that grant decisions will be announced in late fall.)

Milestone	Start Date	End Date
Feasibility / Survey		
Design / Engineering		
Environmental Review / Permitting		
Bidding / Contracting		
Construction Start		
50% Construction		
Construction Complete		
Punch List		

2.11 **Permits/Licenses/Approvals** - Which of the following permits, licenses, and/or approvals are required for the infrastructure project? For all applicable items, indicate if secured and the actual or anticipated dates of filing and issuance.

Item	Check if Secured	Filing Date (Actual or Anticipated)	Decision Date (Actual or Anticipated)
Army Corps of Engineers Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Chapter 91 License	<input type="checkbox"/>		
401 Water Quality Certification	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Superseding Order of Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Water Management Act Permit	<input type="checkbox"/>		
CZM Consistency Concurrence	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Planning / Zoning Board	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Conservation Commission	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>		

- 2.12 **MEPA Threshold** – Does the infrastructure project meet or exceed any of the thresholds for MEPA review set forth in 301 CMR 11.03?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know Yet
- 2.12.a. If Yes, list any filings that the proponent has made or plans to make with the MEPA Office for the project, and indicate whether the review is expected to be full scope or limited scope. _____
- _____
(1,000 characters)
- 2.13 Is the project consistent with the community's other waterfront plans that have received public scrutiny and input and, if applicable, state approval?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 2.13.a. If yes, describe how the proposed project is supported and consistent with these plans. _____
- _____
(500 characters)
- 2.14 Is the project a priority action or recommendation of the community's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning Report?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION 3: Project Budget and Sources

- 3.1 **Project Budget and Grant Request** – In the table below, provide a breakdown, by spending category, of the total budget for the proposed project. (This should include the cost of all elements of the project and not just the amounts that are part of the grant request.)

Spending Category	Funding Request	Match Funds	Total Budget
Report / Plans /Studies			
Pre-Construction (Design, Engineering, Permitting, Bidding, etc.)			
Construction			
Construction Admin			
Contingency			
Equipment			
Other/Miscellaneous (please describe)			
Total			

- 3.2 **Match Funding** – Does the budget for this project include any match funds? (If yes, provide details about the source and status of the match funds. Enter N/A when not applicable.)
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3.2.a. Describe the source(s) and status of match funds being provided directly by applicant and/or any project partners, and whether the funds are secured or pending. _____
(500 characters)
- 3.2.b. Describe the source(s) and status of any match funds being provided from other state grants, and whether the funds are secured or pending. _____
(500 characters)

3.2.c. Describe the source(s) and status of any match funds being provided by federal grants, and whether the funds are secured or pending. _____
(500 characters)

3.3 **Project Cost Estimate** – Does the applicant have a cost estimate or proposal from prospective consultant(s), contractor(s), or other services provider(s) for this project?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3.4 **ATTACHMENT:** *Attach an engineer's cost estimate or similar document that details and substantiates the requested grant amount for construction. The attachment should include the date the estimate was prepared, and the name of the person or company that prepared it. For planning and design projects the estimate may be a proposal from a professional service provider.*

SECTION 4: Community and Environmental Impact

4.1 **Environmental Justice** – Is the project site located within one mile of an Environmental Justice census block group? [CLICK HERE](#) to access the Commonwealth's Environmental Justice Map Viewer.

☐ Yes ☐ No

4.2 **Community Description and Engagement Plan** – Describe the community/population(s) that will be most directly impacted by the project and the engagement efforts that have informed the project. If applicable, describe how the project advances opportunities for community members who have been socially and economically disadvantaged, and/or historically underrepresented. _____

(1,000 characters)

4.3 Will this project result in any direct or indirect economic or community benefits, such as adding new jobs, supporting new housing units, increasing public access to coastal resources, etc.?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4.3.a. If yes, briefly describe those economic/community benefits. _____
(500 characters)

4.4 Will this project coincide with and/or support any other economic development projects happening in the community?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4.4.a. If yes, briefly describe any direct or indirect support that the project provides. _____
(500 characters)

4.5 **Environmental Sustainability and Greenhouse Gas Reduction** – Describe how the applicant will take climate change and environmental sustainability into consideration in the execution of the work for which the funding is requested. If applicable, describe what efforts will take place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on site in support of the [Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050](#). _____

(1,000 characters)

4.6 **Climate Resilience Design Standard Report** – *This report is required for responding to questions below and will be consulted by reviewers. The Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool is accessed via the following link: https://resilientma.org/rmat_home/designstandards/. (The entire process, exclusive of registration, should take no more than 15 minutes using the guide provided on the website.)*

- 4.7 **ATTACHMENT:** *Attach a copy of the project's output report from the Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool.*
- 4.8 Does the project's Climate Resilience Design Tool report provide a "High" preliminary exposure score for either Sea Level Rise/Storm Surge, Extreme Precipitation - Urban Flooding, or Extreme Precipitation - Riverine Flooding?
☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4.8.a. If yes, please specify the design storm (return period) that the applicant intends to use or has used in the engineering of the asset used in the Tool (e.g., the 25-year storm or 4% storm).
- ☐ Less than 25-year (4%) storm
☐ 25-year (4%) storm
☐ 50-year (2%) storm
☐ 100- to 200-year (1 to 0.5%) storm
☐ Greater than 200-year (0.5%) storm
- 4.9 Will the project evaluate or directly address any impacts of climate change, especially impacts outlined in the Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-climate-change-assessment>)?
☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION 5: Application Certifications

To be completed by the individual that is authorized to submit this application on behalf of the Applicant Organization.

I, _____ (Submitter Name), hereby certify that I am duly authorized to submit this application on behalf of _____ (Applicant Organization Name), and further certify, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that the responses to the questions provided in this application, and the attached documentation, are true, accurate, and complete.

I understand that EOED will rely on the information provided in this application in deciding whether to award a grant, and that the Commonwealth reserves the right to take action against me, the applicant organization, or any other beneficiary of a grant, if any of the information provided is determined to be false, inaccurate, or misleading.

I hereby also affirm that, if awarded, the applicant organization has the capacity to carry out the project in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations and understand and acknowledge that all materials submitted as part of this application are subject to disclosure under the Massachusetts Public Records Law.

Name: _____ Title/Role: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____